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SECURITY INFORMATION

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APR 16 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : Report on the Status of Photo-Intelligence

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1. [REDACTED] ORR Consultant, has recently completed a two-weeks' tour of duty with us, during which time he investigated the availability of photographic material for study by ORR analysts and the ways in which photo-intelligence could be used by ORR.

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2. [REDACTED] made the following recommendations in his final report to me:

"a. That ORR have on its staff a skilled photo-interpreter fully aware of the photo-intelligence potential of the material now available to ORR, OCI and OSI analysts. For this position, I recommend to you without reservation [REDACTED]

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"b. That it would be most useful to the analysts in ORR and other offices of CIA to have available a small team of photo-interpreters with the standard Photo-Interpretation equipment to work directly with the analysts at their desks. Such a group could be slowly accumulated as the appropriate persons are located. At this time it seems that not more than three photo-interpreters are needed. I/Air could effectively use a photo-interpreter continuously for about four months at this time. I am sure other units could do likewise.

If areas now closed to us are opened, there will be a much greater need and the suggested three might well serve as a pilot operation to work out the techniques of coordinating intelligence on an all-source basis. Such a group of interpreters should have a close liaison with Graphics Register, OCD, where much of the material is available and unused.

"c. That the current aerial photography over North Korea be utilized for ORR evaluation of the economic potential of that area by the employment of selected Army and Air Force Photo-Interpretation Teams (Reserve), as an external research project."

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3. We are taking the necessary steps to implement the general program recommended by [REDACTED] and to correct the specific problems uncovered by his investigation.

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4. I am attaching hereto a summary of extracts from [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] report which may be of interest to you.

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[REDACTED]
ROBERT AMORY, JR.
Assistant Director
Research and Reports

Enclosure:
Summary of Extracts

[REDACTED]/ela
OAD/RR
16 Apr 52

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Distribution:
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USE OF PHOTO-INTERPRETATION AND PHOTO INTELLIGENCE BY CIA

Definitions:

Photo Interpretation Reports are the result of careful study of aerial photographs by skilled personnel. Such reports are based primarily upon the evidence presented by the photographs. THESE ARE ONE OF THE VERY FEW PIECES OF DIRECT EVIDENCE AVAILABLE FROM A CLOSED AREA. A minimum of information from other sources is incorporated in the report. Generally speaking the reports may be considered reliable and conservative.

Photo Intelligence Reports are the result of combining, usually in conference at the working level, the results of skilled photo interpretation with the total of other information available about a particular installation or group of installations. A fully qualified team may be expected to produce a highly reliable report that is less conservative than either a photo interpretation or an intelligence summary.

Discussion:

1. The two organizations that produce photo interpretations in the Washington area and are available to service CIA are:

- a. Photo Interpretation Section, Reconnaissance Branch, Director of Intelligence, US Air Forces -- PIS/AF, hereafter;
- b. Photo Interpretation Center, Bureau of Aeronautics, US Navy -- PIC/USN, hereafter.

* * *

2. There is no service organization in the Washington area that is capable of preparing photo-intelligence reports for CIA. The very nature of such reports requires that they be prepared by the intelligence producer. Any other system is time consuming and often entails security problems difficult to resolve.

* * *

3. There is a current need in CIA for a skilled photo-intelligence officer, with adequate equipment to perform some photo interpretation, to make the necessary plans for future operations within CIA, to educate CIA personnel in the potentials and limitations of photo interpretation

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and to represent CIA at any conferences where strategic reconnaissance is being considered. Such a person might well be carried on the roster of ORR. (See Appendix III.)

4. There is a future need depending upon the international situation for a small unit of photo-interpreters within CIA. The CIA requirement is for photo-intelligence rather than photo-interpretation. Thus it will be necessary for the interpreters and analysts to work as a team. In case there is an expansion of hostilities and areas now restricted from photo reconnaissance are opened, there will be an even greater demand for photo-intelligence in CIA. In all cases, photo-interpretation reports from Air Forces and Navy are of some assistance to CIA but the full benefit of the photography will come only through the development of photo intelligence reports within CIA. (See Appendix III.)

Appendices:

- I. Digest of Conferences
- II. Aerial Photography Available to CIA
- III. CIA's Need for Photo-Intelligence
- IV. Captured Japanese Photography

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Appendix I

Digest of Conferences Held by [REDACTED]

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* * *

On 1 April we visited PIS/AF and discussed the capabilities of that unit to do photo-interpretations for CIA beyond the present demand. PIS/AF is too short of personnel to take on much additional work for CIA and must refuse such tasks that cannot be justified as legitimate fulfillment of the requirements of Air Force. They now stretch a point for us but as the load from Air Force is increased, it will become more difficult to give the high priority now given to CIA work.

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* * *

On 7 April, I attended the monthly meeting of the Graphics Research Coordination Group at Tempo "U" and later I was taken through the GRS/AF at which time many pertinent problems were discussed, [REDACTED] photography, captured Japanese photography. If this unit can establish its Operational Print Library, it will be a boon to any photo-intelligence unit working in CIA.

ONI was visited on 8 April. The outcome of this was to set in motion the necessary action to bring to CIA the regularly-issued index cards to all photography and P.I. reports received by ONI.

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Appendix II

Aerial Photography Available to CIA

1. No one knows exactly how much aerial photography is available in the Washington area. A rough estimate of 3,000,000 different photographs suggests the order of this mass of potential intelligence material. It is at present housed in several libraries.

* * *

2. Captured Photography

a. German aerial photography covering almost all of USSR west of the Urals and some small areas east of those mountains is available. In the Central Film Library, Air A/G, are copy negatives of this material. These negatives were made reducing the original 12 x 12 prints to 9 x 9. Full-scale copies were made of the best of this material by AOF/AF as "Copy Cat" project. These are available to CIA on a loan basis from the Operational Print Library in Tempo "U".

b. Japanese aerial photography in Washington is limited to material dated in the period 1932-1934. More recent captured material was held in the field, unknown to Washington. Action has been taken by CIA to recover this later photography for use by Washington agencies.

3. Current Photography

a. Tactical and strategic photography of North Korea with fragmentary runs over adjacent Manchurian territory on the Yalu River. (See Appendix II-A.)

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b. Occasional sneak runs over [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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d. Occasional surveillance runs by USAF [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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e. Extensive USN photography of coastal areas and ports in [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Appendix II-A

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North Korean Aerial Photography

1. Approximately 100 cubic feet of prints of aerial photographs taken over North Korea are being received each week at PIS/AF from FEAF. According to Mr. Tate as many as 50,000 prints have been received in one week. This is material from strategic and tactical reconnaissance. Up to one year ago -- about 1 March 1951 -- CIA was advised regularly of the content of this material by means of Mission Review Reports (MRR). At that time increased demands upon the personnel in PIS/AF made it impossible for continuation of this service to CIA and other interested agencies.

2. Currently this vast reservoir of potential intelligence is handled in a manner admittedly unsatisfactory but dictated by lack of personnel to adequately review and report the material received. Even more unsatisfactory is the fact that after being held for 90 days the photography is destroyed. The system for handling this material at present is essentially this: the photographs and related FEAF Mission Reports are received in bulk diplomatic mail pouches from Japan; PIC/AF packages each mission separately, indexes it and removes the mission report; the FEAF Mission Report is filed in PIC/AF for future reference; the photographs are turned over to Air A/G for filing in the Photographic Library where they are held for 90 days, then burned. The original negatives are held by FEAF.

*Why
Can't
we get
it*

Comment: A cursory review of 90 days accumulation indicates that there is considerable material of interest to researchers in CIA among the photographs. The great bulk of the photos are classified Restricted, a small percent is Confidential.

3.

* * *

Mission Review Reports present two opportunities for exploitation: (a) extraction of data supplied by FEAF photo interpreters, and (b) selection of aerial photographs that should be further studied for economic intelligence use.

* * *

It is believed that through these MRR's, distributed and undistributed, considerable information can be accumulated relative to the rehabilitation of industrial plants damaged by aerial bombing in North Korea. This might be of importance in judging the types of industry in "short supply," the time necessary to rehabilitate factories in the Far East under different conditions of bombing, etc., and for related economic implications.

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Appendix III

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CIA's Need for Photo-Intelligence

1. During the past two weeks, I have visited many of the branches in ORR and discussed with the analysts their problems in terms of use of aerial photographs. In all offices the personnel are aware of aerial photographs and photo-interpretation reports. In few were they aware that considerably more information could be derived from the available photography than they had at hand. In many offices, this was demonstrated by sitting down with the analyst and the photographs and combining forces to extract photo-intelligence by uniting data from the photographs and documents that were being used in the study of a particular plant.

* * *

2.

* * *

10-year-old photography is an important basic cover that may be used for the starting point of a study on any plant that is not wholly new. The limitations of terrain and layout of urban areas upon a planned economic expansion program is clear. Combined with evidence of change from interrogations etc., these old photographs allow the development of reasonably accurate and reliable intelligence. These old photographs, possibly more than 300,000 in number, may be used to check the accuracy of POW reports and select from a hundred or so of them those that are most reliable. There is also a psychological effect upon the analyst. Once he has seen a plant in three dimensions under a stereoscope the plant becomes a real entity and is no longer merely a name.

* * *

3. At present there is no effective way for the analysts to utilize the mass of direct evidence present in the available aerial photographs. He does have the photo-interpretations made by various agencies for targeting projects. These are a very poor substitute for what he may have under the proper conditions. They were prepared for use in deciding "bombability." The analyst's task is to judge economic potential. This requires a different point of view on the part of the photo-interpreter. To achieve the maximum economic information from this source it is necessary for the analyst and the photo-interpreter to sit down together and by question-and-answer technique discover the probable function of each building and establish a flow-plan for the operations carried out at the plant. Once this is done the critical buildings can be selected and studied. * * * All of this requires the closest cooperation between analyst and photo-interpreter. Of course the ideal situation would be to have the two persons combined in one!

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4. Since it is impossible to train each of the analysts to be a competent photo-interpreter, the next best thing is to have available in CIA a small team of adequately equipped skilled industrial photo-interpreters to act with analysts. These should be so placed in the organization that their services are available to all parts of CIA.

* * * There is dire need for one individual in ORR who is well versed in photo-intelligence to circulate and learn the individual analyst's problems in terms of photo-interpretation. * * * He would plan out the most economic utilization of the photo-interpreters' time, doing actual photo-interpretations himself when possible. Where capable analysts are found he might well instruct them sufficiently to do most of their own interpreting and act as a referee or guide for them when the going gets too rough.

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Appendix IV

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Captured Japanese Aerial Photography

1. The dates on the Captured Japanese Aerial Photography available through the Central Film Library, Air A/G, are confined to the early 1930's. * * * Inquiry with persons recently returned from Japan revealed that later photography does exist and that it is being used by several units operating with the Occupation Forces but no one knew exactly who was holding the material, its date and extent. 25X1A

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2. A conference was held with Mr. Guthe and [REDACTED] relative to the importance of retrieving this photography for use by CIA and other interested agencies in Washington. The decision was reached that it was strongly advisable that Mr. [REDACTED] extend his time in Japan by at least seven days to pursue the scant clues available. 25X1A

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* * *
3. It is hoped that the combined efforts of [REDACTED] [REDACTED] will make available sufficient information about the captured Japanese aerial photography so that appropriate action may be initiated by OCD to bring to Washington the required prints or duplicate negatives at the earliest possible date.

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